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Security Council

Fifty-eighth year

Provisional

4768th meeting

Thursday, 5 June 2003, 10.30 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Lavrov	(Russian Federation)
Members:	Angola	Mr. Lucas
	Bulgaria	Mr. Tafrov
	Cameroon	Mr. Banoum
	Chile	Mr. Valdés
	China	Mr. Wang Yingfan
	France	Mr. De La Sablière
	Germany	Mr. Pleuger
	Guinea	Mr. Traoré
	Mexico	Mr. Aguilar Zinser
	Pakistan	Mr. Akram
	Spain	Ms. Menéndez
	Syrian Arab Republic	Mr. Mekdad
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir Jeremy Greenstock
	United States of America	Mr. Negroponte

Agenda

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Note by the Secretary-General (S/2003/580)

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03-38318 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.45 a.m.

Expression of thanks to the retiring President

The President (*spoke in Russian*): As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of June, I should like to take the opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to Mr. Munir Akram, Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of May. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Munir Akram for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation between Iraq and Kuwait

Note by the Secretary-General (S/2003/580)

The President (*spoke in Russian*): In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

It is so decided.

I invite Mr. Blix to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2003/580, which contains a note by the Secretary-General transmitting the report of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Mr. Hans Blix, Executive Chairman of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission. I now give him the floor.

Mr. Blix: The thirteenth quarterly report of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) is before the Council in document S/2003/580. It covers the period 1 March to 31 May. The Commission carried out inspections in Iraq up to and including Monday, 17 March. The day thereafter, Tuesday, 18 March, all international staff were withdrawn, and the armed action commenced on 19 March.

We are gratified that the withdrawal took place in good order and with full cooperation from the Iraqi side.

I think that the UNMOVIC report speaks for itself. It is a bit longer than usual, because we thought it might be useful for the Council to get a fuller perspective on some of the questions.

Let me highlight some points.

The first point, made in paragraph 8 of the report, is that the Commission has not at any time during the inspections in Iraq found evidence of the continuation or resumption of programmes of weapons of mass destruction or significant quantities of proscribed items — whether from pre-1991 or later. I leave aside the Al Samoud 2 missile system, which we concluded was proscribed.

As I have noted before, this does not necessarily mean that such items could not exist. They might — there remain long lists of items unaccounted for — but it is not justified to jump to the conclusion that something exists just because it is unaccounted for.

In paragraph 11, we note that the long list of proscribed items unaccounted for has not been shortened by inspections or Iraqi declarations, explanations or documentation. It was the task of the Iraqi side to present items unaccounted for, if they existed, or to present evidence — records, documents or other — convincing the inspectors that the items do not exist. If, for whatever reason, this is not done, the international community cannot have confidence that past programmes or any remaining parts of them have been terminated. However, an effective presence of international inspectors will serve as a deterrent against efforts aimed at reactivating or developing new programmes of weapons of mass destruction.

Although during the last month and a half of our inspections the Iraqi side made considerable efforts to provide explanations, to begin inquiries and to

undertake exploration and excavations, those efforts did not bring the answers needed before we withdrew. We did not have time to interview more than a handful of the large number of persons who were said by Iraq to have participated in the unilateral destruction of biological and chemical weapons in 1991. Such interviews might have helped towards the resolution of some outstanding issues, although one must be aware that the totalitarian regime in Iraq continued to cast a shadow on the credibility of all interviews.

The report before the Council gives details of the Commission's supervision of the destruction of 50 Al Samoud 2 missiles out of the 75 declared to have been deployed, and of other items in the missile sphere. As the Council will note from the table in paragraph 115 of the report, the programme of destruction was not completed at the time the inspectors where withdrawn. Fifty per cent of the declared warheads and 98 per cent of the missile engines remained intact. Also, there was no time to assess whether the Al Fatah missile programme stayed within the range allowed by Security Council resolutions.

In the context of the destruction of proscribed items, I should also like to draw the attention of the Council to the information provided in appendix I. It shows that the weapons that were destroyed before inspectors left in 1998 were, in almost all cases, declared by Iraq, and that the destruction occurred before 1993 in the case of missiles, and before 1994 in the case of chemical weapons. The existence and scope of the biological weapons programme was uncovered by the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM) in 1995, despite Iraq's denials and concealment efforts. As to items, only a few remnants of the biological weapons programme were subsequently found. A great deal — Iraq asserts all — was unilaterally destroyed in 1991.

Thus, in the main, UNSCOM's supervised destruction of actual weapons and agents took place during the early years of the Commission, and had regard mainly to items declared by Iraq, or at least found at sites declared by Iraq. Subsequent UNSCOM disarmament activities dealt almost exclusively with the destruction of equipment and facilities for the production of weapons connected to past programmes. In addition, of course, UNSCOM was able, with great skill, to map large parts of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction programmes.

While we are all aware of the large amounts of proscribed items that still remain unaccounted for, we should perhaps take note of the fact that for many years neither UNSCOM nor UNMOVIC made significant finds of weapons. The lack of finds could be because the items were unilaterally destroyed by the Iraqi authorities or else because they were effectively concealed by them. I trust that in the new environment in Iraq, in which there is full access and cooperation, and in which knowledgeable witnesses should no longer be inhibited from revealing what they know, it should be possible to establish the truth we all want to know.

Let me further make some brief comments on mobile facilities, as there is currently much media attention devoted to this issue. Even before UNMOVIC began its inspections, in November 2002, the Commission had received information about such facilities, and our inspectors were looking for sites where such mobile units could be hooked up for support services. Upon our request, the Iraqi side presented some information about the mobile system they possessed. As the Council will see from our report, neither the information presented to us nor pictures given to us by the Iraqi side match the description that has recently been made available to us, as well as to the media, by the United States. At UNMOVIC, we cannot of course make a proper evaluation of the depicted vehicles on the basis of published material alone.

In resolution 1483 (2003), the Security Council declared its intention to revisit the mandate of UNMOVIC. The Council will be aware that UNMOVIC remains ready to resume work in Iraq as an independent verifier or to conduct long-term monitoring, should the Council so decide. In paragraph 16 of the introduction to the report before the Council, and in chapter VIII of the report, there are some comments on UNMOVIC's readiness to resume work in the field. Some reduction in UNMOVIC's staff will take place. However, the core expertise and experience available within UNMOVIC remain a valuable asset that the Security Council could use where the services of an independent body would be required for verification and monitoring. That might be of particular value in the field of biological weapons and missiles, for which there exists no international verification organization.

As this is likely to be my last briefing to the Security Council as Executive Chairman of UNMOVIC, I would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every member of the Council for the valuable guidance and support offered to UNMOVIC and myself. I would also warmly like to thank the Secretary-General personally and the Secretariat for the excellent cooperation they provided since the creation of UNMOVIC. I have had the opportunity to thank UNMOVIC's College of Commissioners for the advice that it has provided; it has been of great help throughout our existence. I trust that the Council has noted the excellent working relationship that prevailed between Mr. ElBaradei of the International Atomic Energy Agency and myself. We formed a good team of long-standing friendship in which his knowledge of Arabic proved more directly useful than my knowledge of Swedish.

I want to end my statement by noting the strong commitment among nations, both within and outside the Security Council, to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, to terrorists as well as to States, and to eventually to achieve the elimination of those weapons. The case of Iraq has been a major factor in forging that commitment. The wide support that UNMOVIC has received from Governments and from the public is further testimony to the strong wish to reduce the dangers posed by weapons of mass destruction and to the continued importance of inspection.

The President (*spoke in Russian*): I thank Mr. Blix for his comprehensive briefing. Taking note of the intention of Mr. Blix to retire from his post at the end of June, I wish, on behalf of the members of the Council, to express our sincere gratitude to Mr. Blix for his service, as well as our appreciation for the efforts made by him and his team to implement the mandate of the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) in accordance with the Security Council's resolutions. The members of the Council also pay tribute to Mr. Blix for his leadership and for the dedicated and professional manner in which he has guided the work of UNMOVIC in pursuit of the disarmament of Iraq.

In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I should now like to invite Council members to informal consultations to continue our discussion of this subject.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.